

tous animal, the largest yet observed in the Mammalia, as may be seen by reference to the copious Tables of Measurements which I have appended to the English version of Gerber's Anatomy, and to my edition of Hewson's Works, published for the Sydenham Society. With the exception just mentioned, it is still a very interesting fact, that a simple examination of less than one hundredth of a grain of its dried blood would suffice to distinguish the Anteater from any other animal in the Society's Menagerie.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

March 8, 1855.—Professor Balfour, President, in the Chair.

The following papers were read:—

1. "A Comparative View of the more important Stages of Development of some of the higher Cryptogamia and the Phanerogamia," by Charles Jenner, Esq.

This paper has appeared in the 'Annals,' p. 241.

2. "Notes of a Botanical Tour in the Channel Islands in August 1854," by Mr. C. Baxter.

The author does not appear to have added to the known flora of the Islands.

3. "On some Gall-like appearances on the Leaves of a species of *Chrysophyllum* from the Rio Negro collected by Mr. Spruce," by Mr. James Hardy.

These productions consist of a considerable number of deep brown, polygonal or suboblong spots, situated near each other on the under surface of the leaf, and occupying slight depressions. They are about 1 line in diameter, only slightly raised above the level of the leaf, and very densely covered with short, closely intertwined, crisp hair. From each of these, when perfect, arises a small subglobular wart, about three-fourths of a line in diameter, of a pale chestnut colour, and densely pubescent, with longer and nearly straight hair. The upper surface of the leaves opposite to these spots is slightly protuberant, and sometimes withered. Occasionally there is a small depression corresponding to the centre of the gall; but this is never pierced. The gall-formed portions are hollow in the centre, and in one of the largest something like the smooth walls of a cell were traced. They appear to have been the habitation of some insect, but are now empty. They have probably not attained their full growth, and this will account for the want of a definite nucleus.

4. "Extracts from a letter from Dr. Cleghorn, on the discovery by Major Cotton of the Gutta Percha plant in Malabar." Communicated by Professor Balfour. In his letter, dated 13th January 1855, Dr. Cleghorn remarks:—"Three days ago Major Frederick Cotton of the Madras Engineers made a discovery. Riding through the Wynnad district a week or two since, he discovered the Gutta Percha tree, and forwarded a specimen of the gum with a branch of the plant to me, from which it appears to be a true *Isonandra*. It is believed that the tree grows abundantly in the jungles of Malabar,

but that is a point which can only be ascertained by diligent search. The importance of the discovery can hardly be over-rated, now that the forests of Singapore have been almost entirely exhausted."

5. "On some Plants which have recently flowered in the Royal Botanic Garden," by Professor Balfour. These plants were *Tricyrtis pilosa*, *Boucerosia Munbyana*—noticed by Munby in his Flora of Algiers, and *Erianthus japonicus*. The last had been sent to the garden under the name of Nepal Sugar-cane. Major Madden writes—"E. japonicus occurs all along the Himalaya from Assam up to Simla, growing on the northern sides of the mountains in damp woods, and generally near rivulets, up to 7000 feet, or perhaps 7500, and is a fine species. It has only recently been identified as the Japan plant, and you will find it frequently noted in Griffith's Journals as *Saccharum rubrum*. It has, however, no saccharine qualities, and does not merit the name of Nepal Sugar-cane."

Mr. M'Nab laid before the Meeting a table of observations of the lowest temperatures indicated by the Register Thermometer kept at the Botanic Garden during January and February 1855, from which it appears that the—

Average lowest temperature for January was 31° Fahr.

„ „ „ for February 23°.

And the average lowest temperature from the 15th January to the 28th February 23°.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ORIGIN OF WHEAT.

THE experiments of M. Fabre on the Origin of Wheat, and the consequent conclusions adopted by several distinguished naturalists, that most of our cultivated wheats were derived from species of *Ægilops*, have excited great interest on the continent of Europe. Botanists, whose ideas on the specific distinction of plants marked by slight differences have been carried very far, have felt that their principles would be much shaken if it were admitted that two plants in their opinion so totally different had a common origin, and several refutations of M. Dunal's arguments have been attempted, although hitherto without much success.

M. Godron, of Besançon, one of the authors of the 'Flore de France,' now in course of publication, has just, however, communicated to the 'Annales des Sciences Naturelles,' the result of his observations and experiments, which he considers as removing all weight from the arguments of MM. Fabre and Dunal by accounting otherwise for the phænomena on which they were founded.

The *Ægilops triticoides*, the intermediate form or transitional state between *Æ. ovata* and wheat, is, according to M. Godron, when growing wild, found on the edges of wheat-fields in a country where *Æ. ovata* is a common weed, and under other circumstances of growth, which suggested to him the idea that it was a natural hybrid between